

What is claimed is:

1. A method of reducing a power supply voltage which is supplied from a voltage regulator to at least one particular circuit, said voltage regulator being configured to adjust its output voltage by use of an external output voltage setting circuit connected thereto, a switching element being used to connect an output voltage setting terminal of said voltage regulator to a ground via a predetermined resistance, the method comprising:

turning off the switching element so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is set at a preset power supply voltage for enabling said at least one particular circuit; and

turning on the switching element so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is reduced to a predetermined voltage which is lower than the preset power supply voltage.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined voltage is substantially equal to a reference voltage of said voltage regulator, the reference voltage being lower than an operating voltage of the at least one particular circuit.

3. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

determining in advance whether the at least one particular circuit is in a normal operating condition or in an abnormal

operating condition,

wherein the turning on the switching element step is performed when it is determined that the at least one particular circuit is in the abnormal operating condition by said determining step.

4. A power supply voltage reduction system for reducing a power supply voltage which is supplied to at least one particular circuit from a voltage regulator, comprising:

an output voltage setting circuit that is connected to said voltage regulator to adjust an output voltage of said voltage regulator;

a switching element that is used to connect an output voltage setting terminal of said voltage regulator to a ground via a predetermined resistance; and

a controller that controls an on/off state of said switching element, wherein said controller switches said switching element to one of the on and off states so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is reduced to a predetermined voltage which is lower than a preset power supply voltage.

5. The power supply voltage reduction system according to claim 4,

wherein said controller turns off said switching element

so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is set at the preset power supply voltage for enabling said at least one particular circuit, and turns on said switching element so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is reduced to the predetermined voltage lower than the preset power supply voltage.

6. The power supply voltage reduction system according to claim 4, wherein the predetermined voltage is substantially equal to a reference voltage of said voltage regulator, the reference voltage being lower than an operating voltage of the at least one particular circuit.

7. The power supply voltage reduction system according to claim 4, further comprising:

a monitoring system that monitors said at least one particular circuit to determine whether said at least one particular circuit is in a normal operating condition or in an abnormal operating condition,

wherein said controller turns on said switching element when said monitoring system determines that said at least one particular circuit is in the abnormal operating condition.

8. A CCD driving system comprising:

a CCD driving circuit that outputs a driving signal for driving a CCD;

a timing generator that generates and outputs a pulse signal for driving said CCD driving circuit;

a voltage regulator that supplies a preset power supply voltage to said CCD driving circuit and said timing generator;

an output voltage setting circuit that is connected to said voltage regulator to adjust an output voltage of said voltage regulator;

a switching element that is used to connect an output voltage setting terminal of said voltage regulator to a ground via a predetermined resistance; and

a controller that controls an on/off state of said switching element, said controller switches said switching element to one of the on and off states so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is reduced to a predetermined voltage which is lower than the preset power supply voltage.

9. The CCD driving system according to claim 8,

wherein said controller turns off said switching element so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is set at the preset power supply voltage for enabling said CCD driving circuit and said timing generator, and turns on said switching element so that the output voltage of said voltage regulator is reduced to the predetermined voltage lower than the preset power supply voltage.

10. The CCD driving system according to claim 8,

wherein the predetermined voltage is substantially equal to a reference voltage of said voltage regulator, the reference voltage being lower than an operating voltage of said CCD driving circuit and said timing generator.

11. The CCD driving system according to claim 8, further comprising a monitoring system that monitors said CCD driving circuit to determine whether said CCD driving circuit is in a normal operating condition or in an abnormal operating condition,

wherein said controller turns on said switching element when said monitoring system determines that said CCD driving circuit is in the abnormal operating condition.

12. The CCD driving system according to claim 8, wherein said timing generator is configured to hold the pulse signal supplied to said CCD driving circuit at a ground level when the output voltage of said voltage regulator is lower than a first voltage which is lower than the preset power supply voltage and higher than or equal to the predetermined voltage.